

Civic Trust Auckland Newsletter 2010

This is the second newsletter for the current calendar year. It has been compiled at the last minute and in some haste and apology is given for the crude presentation, with minimal photographs, due to the absence overseas of Audrey van Ryn, who presented our last newsletter much more professionally in "publisher" format. She is sorely missed in the meantime. Items missed from this newsletter and various associated photographs will be incorporated into the next newsletter (eg. Audrey's involvement at the ECO conference, Coolangatta book launch, Waikato inter-city train re-instatement, Cherry Raymond Q S O for safe keeping, etc).

Subscriptions and Donations

Subscriptions are due for the current financial year, which commenced on the first of August. Most members have given generous donations in the past and it is hoped that further donations will be received in the future, to go towards the many activities undertaken, or supported by Civic Trust Auckland. **Subscriptions forms and details for 2010/2011 are included**

This year your board has agreed to send a significant donation of \$5,000 to its sister organisation Christchurch Civic Trust, to spend as it may see fit on matters concerning heritage buildings and particularly associated reports on heritage buildings where there has been structural damage as a result of the recent earthquake. Specific donations from trust members to assist us to make this and other meaningful contributions will be gratefully accepted.

Winter lecture series

For the last two years Civic Trust Auckland, in conjunction with the Kinder House Society has produced a series of four events and it is hoped that these will comprise a permanent fixture on our joint calendars each year.

This year the first event on June 13 was a visit to Kinder library at St John's College in Meadowbank.

At Kinder house on July 4 Ludo Campbell-Reid gave an excellent and thought provoking presentation before a good audience for a cold wet afternoon, on "*urban design in Auckland - past - present and future*". Ludo is the Auckland City Council urban design champion and has an important planning position within the new super city. He is very energetic and has wide knowledge of many aspects of urban design overseas. He also typically introduces notable speakers for the various "mayoral conversations" which take place at the Aotea Centre during the year. Incidentally, mayoral conversations are particularly interesting and most if not all Civic Trust Auckland board members have attended at least one during the year.

On August 8 John Webster, Kinder house society member and well-known identity in Auckland heritage and historical circles, spoke on the theme "*ramblings around history*".

On September 5 George Farrant, chief heritage adviser in the Auckland City Council and Bev Parslow, Regional Archaeologist, New Zealand Historic Places Trust spoke before an enthusiastic audience on the theme "*heritage and the super city*". A third speaker Colin Dale, Auckland Transitional Agency Community Services Work Stream Leader, was absent due to ill health but subsequently gave a presentation to board members at their meeting on the 14th of September.

Strategy planning workshop - Agenda constitution remits for AGM

As a result of the March Saturday afternoon workshop, three items need to be placed on the agenda for the forthcoming 6 November AGM. **The CTA 2010 Agenda is attached**

Two of these are fairly straightforward, involving board member numbers and the numbers required for a quorum. These two suggestions both flow naturally from a study of how the board has been able to react to matters as they arise and a study of the numbers which would be best and most practical for the proper conduct of monthly meetings. With resignations from Carol Sanders and Roy Clements during the year our board numbers are now low at seven and it is proving difficult to obtain a quorum. In consequence the following motions will be put to the AGM:

1. **That the number of board members be increased from the present eight to ten.**

At present the Constitution states at 10 (a) "The officers of the Trust shall consist of a President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer, all of whom must be members of the Trust. The President and Vice President together with six others, all of whom must be members of the Trust shall together constitute the Board of Directors".

2. **That a quorum of board members be reduced from the present five to four.**

At present the Constitution states at 12 (b) "No business shall be transacted at any meeting unless a quorum of the members thereof is present at the time when the meeting proceeds to business. At 12 (c) "A quorum of the board will be constituted for any meeting of the Board if five members of the Board are personally present".

An alternative wording for this second resolution might be as follows:

2 (a) that a quorum of board members may be reduced from five to four, in the event that board numbers are seven or less and the board has been unsuccessful in appointing additional board members.

A third matter requires some debate as it had been raised at the workshop without prior warning and discussed over a matter of just a few minutes, before being adopted.

3. **That the terms "vice president" and "president" be replaced with "chairman" and "deputy chairman".**

The reason for this proposal is that, in the words of the workshop proposer "*the term president is lofty and pretentious*".

This may well be so. Indeed at the workshop Roy Clements thought the term "*grandiose*", although most others were ambivalent. However, subsequent to the workshop it transpires that this decision might be seen by some Trust members as contentious, in so far as the quaint term "president" is now part of the heritage of Civic Trust Auckland, having been decided upon by its foundation members and enduring unchanged through its first 40 years. Changing this aspect of the Trust's heritage may possibly require a more substantial reason than that given so far. This will be for the membership to decide. I, as president will stand aside from voting upon this issue.

For a proper discussion of this matter it would be necessary to consider why the term "president" was adopted by the founders of Civic Trust Auckland in 1968. Do any of the older members have any knowledge of this decision? Perhaps it has something to do with the fact that Civic Trust Auckland is region-wide, rather than being village, town, or city-based, as is the case with our sister trusts elsewhere in New Zealand. Today, the term might be associated by New Zealanders with things American, although any dictionary will disclose that it predates the American colonies. Certainly in all other respects our Trust founders based their original (and subsequently little changed) constitution on British precedent, namely that of the Civic Trust of Britain, an

organisation which sadly went into administration in 2009. There are many other civic trusts throughout the world and although by skimming a handful of Web sites, most appear to have adopted a version of the term "chair", others adopt the term "director", yet others use the term "president" as in Britain, for example for the York, Leeds and Welsh Civic Trusts, to name a few. Would their members consider the term to be "lofty and pretentious"?

Does Auckland need a convention centre?

Five separate organisations have submitted proposals for the construction of a major convention centre. These range in cost from \$330 million to \$550 million. If any of these proposals is commercially viable, then why is it necessary for any go ahead decision to be put in the hands of a third-party? Are all of these proposals requiring some form of public funding?

Birdcage Goes Walkabout

The Birdcage Tavern in Freemans Bay has made the outward part of its short but expensive \$2.5 million journey there and back, to the amazement of observers and it appears currently to be still in one piece. Many people and organisations contributed their bit toward saving the Birdcage; none more so than landscape design specialist and heritage campaigner Richard Reid, to whom Civic Trust Auckland gives its grateful thanks.

Mining within national Parks

In May the government sought public input into mining within national parks. Quite why it did this is a mystery. The resounding answer was no, reinforced by a fierce submission from Audrey van Ryn and her presence with Roy Clements and many others on the anti-mining march earlier this year.

Jailhouse shock

The new Mt Eden jail has emerged well above the level of the adjoining motorway at the gateway to the CBD. Nobody seems to be able to quite explain how this over-scale monster had managed to obtain planning consent.

Proposed bus Park for quiet Parnell back Street

Parnell residents are in heated opposition over this proposal for use of the ex railway workshop site.

Campbell Free Kindergarten in Victoria Park to be finally upgraded

After years of neglect during which there has been a considerable amount of structural damage, this building is finally being given a makeover. This historic kindergarten will have its Centenary anniversary later this year. Contact Board member Jim Mason if you have historic information?

New Rail platform at Onehunga too short-Avondale just right!

Who is to blame for this latest rail fiasco at Onehunga?

On the other hand the new station at Avondale has recently opened and appears to be just right. It is a pity about the minimalist weather protection for customers at Avondale and, in common with virtually all railway stations in suburban Auckland, the complete lack of any toilet accommodation anywhere in sight.

Thank goodness the Westies are a hardy lot.

Museum back to basics

Wayne Thompson of the New Zealand Herald described in a brief article how Auckland's Museum is now changing back from dumbed-down entertainment to collections and research. Strangely the museum is seeking the opinion of Aucklanders on its proposed interior upgrade. Are there no staff left who can cope with this core activity? The museum has yet to enlighten the public over the matter of recent cost blowouts.

Elephants everywhere

The odd idea that Western Springs Park should be used in part for recreational use by a small herd of elephants has re-surfaced after having been proposed a year or so ago, obviously by someone who has absolutely no understanding of the costs involved. Meanwhile Mayor John Banks has been hopefully thinking aloud about the zoo playing host to a Chinese panda, something which at least one American zoo has found it cannot afford. He is reported to have also contemplated Auckland as the venue for a future Olympic Games. Is there something in the air at this time of year? Bearing in mind that the air was blamed for the last series of rushes of blood to the head (see previous newsletter), is it perhaps now the water?

Heritage festival

Members have been urged to support the Auckland Heritage Festival and take part in some of its many activities. One such was the Auckland Peace Heritage Walk which was launched during the 2009 Auckland Heritage Festival as part of the World March for Peace and Non-Violence. This year it was an event organized by Civic Trust Auckland (Audrey van Ryn) together with the United Nations Association of NZ (Northern Region Branch). The Walk started at two places simultaneously and ended at QEII Square where participants together formed a human peace sign (organised by members of the United Nations Youth Association of NZ). It was a self-guided walk, with participants able to choose from the brochure which of the peace sites they would like to visit, depending on what distance they want to cover. There was also the option to run or cycle the route.

During the festival our irrepressible vice President and Historic Places Trust Board Member, Alan Matson gave a series of talks on heritage protection with the new Auckland Council at the Ellen Melville Hall.

Cluster-busters Committee

This is a City Council initiative for better street furniture and signage. Is there a volunteer who would like to be the representative of Civic Trust Auckland? Contact our secretary for more information.

Note A G M on 6 November 4pm meeting start, socialising 5 > 6pm

M L Graham
President